

JUSTIFICATION  
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)  
Office of Acquisition Operations  
Technology Acquisition Center  
23 Christopher Way  
Eatontown, New Jersey 07724
2. Description of Action: The proposed action is for a firm-fixed-price delivery order to be issued under the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) for brand name BlueStripe FactFinder server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services.
3. Description of Supplies or Services: VA, Office of Information and Technology, Service Delivery and Engineering, Enterprise Operations (EO), Enterprise Infrastructure Support (EIS), has a requirement for BlueStripe FactFinder server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services. BlueStripe FactFinder is a performance monitoring server software application management solution that VA uses in supporting information technology personnel in monitoring the performance and availability of application transaction systems throughout VA data centers. This software integrates into operating system layer servers and monitors all transactions between servers building a live, dynamic topology of the entire server system and displays the bottleneck path throughout a system of servers in real time. The objective of this software tool is to quickly isolate the cause of a performance problem to a specific cause or component but not to analyze the code level performance. The performance monitoring is not limited to any particular programming language, such as Java or .Net, and can monitor any and all communications in and out of a server or systems of servers without prior knowledge of the existence of the communications or any dependency on the communication source. The required software maintenance shall consist of all Original Equipment Manufacturer upgrades, patches, fixes, updates and security resolutions developed by BlueStripe. The required software implementation services shall consist of standard deployment and configuration services consisting of training and limited software customization to VA's requirements. The period of performance is 12 months for software maintenance, inclusive of software delivery and implementation services. The total price of the proposed action is **REDACTED**.
4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting this exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C 4106(c)(2) as implemented by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 16.505(b)(2)(i)(B) entitled, "Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized."

5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited: Based on extensive market research, as described in section 8 of this justification, it was determined that limited competition is available among authorized resellers of the required BlueStripe FactFinder server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services. BlueStripe server software licenses are currently in use by EO, EIS, for the performance monitoring of server transactions. The proposed action is for the procurement of additional software server licenses to allow for increasing demand on system capacity. VA has a functional requirement to monitor all traffic in a server system regardless of its origin, protocol, or prior knowledge of its existence. BlueStripe FactFinder server software is the only software that will allow VA to isolate performance issues at the operational layer without respect to specific application code issues or performance. Additionally, since VA's current software infrastructure for this function consists completely of BlueStripe products, acquisition of a different server product would require a completely separate infrastructure. No other server license is compatible with or interoperable with the existing BlueStripe infrastructure due to BlueStripe's proprietary database structures, protocols, and software application programming interfaces. This lack of interoperability, such as the ability of a different vendor's agent to communicate with another vendor's data collector, is standard throughout the performance monitoring industry. BlueStripe's FactFinder server software license is the only server software license that meets the Government's required functionality in performance monitoring software.

Additionally, the required server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services must be provided by BlueStripe through an authorized reseller. Specifically, without access to BlueStripe's proprietary source code no other source is able to provide software upgrades, patches, fixes, updates or security resolutions and no third party source exists that provides implementation services other than BlueStripe, or an authorized BlueStripe reseller.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in section 8 of this justification. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. It was determined that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers of the required BlueStripe FactFinder server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services. In accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations 5.301 and 16.505(b)(2)(ii)(D), the award notice for this action will be synopsized and this justification made publically available on the Federal Business Opportunities page within 14 days after award. Additionally, this justification shall be posted with the solicitation on the NASA SEWP V GWAC website to notify interested parties.
7. Actions to Increase Competition: In order to remove or overcome barriers to competition in future acquisitions for this requirement, the Government's technical experts will continue to perform market research to determine if there are emerging products available that will enable future requirements to be competed.

8. Market Research: Market research was conducted by VA's EIS technical experts in April 2015 by searching the performance monitoring software products websites of Computer Associates (CA), BMC, Dell, and Arcturus Technologies. All of the products researched, CA's Application Performance Monitoring, BMC's Performance Monitoring, Arcturus Applicare, and Dell Foglight, were unable to meet the unique functional requirements of performance monitoring for all transactions in and out of a server regardless of its association with an application and without respect to application code or application server type. All of the similar server software licenses researched were either application focused and required application agents or network focused without visibility into specific server to server transactions. VA requires the ability to provide for monitoring of all transactions (known and unknown) regardless of its source in and out of a server or system of servers. Additionally, based on reviews of these companies' products and services offered, the Government's technical experts determined that none of these sources can meet the Government's requirement to provide the subject server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services without the aforementioned proprietary source code. Each software developer offers a proprietary system and associated services that will only operate with its respective hardware and software. The market research revealed that only BlueStripe, or authorized BlueStripe resellers, would be capable of meeting VA's requirements. Only BlueStripe certified server software is compatible and can be integrated into proprietary BlueStripe systems. Additionally, no third party vendors were found that provide for software maintenance and implementation services for BlueStripe products resellers.

Additional market research was conducted in September 2015 by utilizing the NASA SEWP V GWAC Quick Request for Information Tool. It was determined that there were several NASA SEWP V GWAC holders that are authorized resellers that can provide the required BlueStripe FactFinder server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services.

9. Other Facts: BlueStripe FactFinder server software licenses, software maintenance, and implementation services were previously awarded by VA on April 3, 2015 under a separate Justification for an Exception to Fair Opportunity. These licenses were successfully implemented, and due to user demands additional licenses are currently required. These new performance monitoring software licenses are to be implemented and used on additional servers throughout VA's network.